1652

CHRIST'S BIRTH,
THE
CHRISTIAN'S BENEFIT.

Delivered in a Sermon preached on the XXV. day of *December*, *Anno Domini* 1651.

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BY

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AUGUSTIN SERM. 115. *de temp.*

Quid rependam Domino pro omnibus quæ tribuit mihi? Primò nihil eram & Fecit me; perieram, Quæsivit me; quærens, Invenit me; inventum Redemit me; redemptum, Liberavit me; de hoste, fecit Servum; de servo, Fratrem; de fratre, co-Hæredem.

GALAT. 4. v. 4, 5.

When the fulneſſe of time was come, God ſent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to Redeeme them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of Sonnes.

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57...1667

TO THE

VVorſhipfull *George Evelyn*, of *Wotton*, in the County of *Surry*, Eſquire; The Authour of this Sermon wiſheth increaſe of Grace (the beginning of Glory) here, and fruition of Glory (the perfection of Grace) hereafter.

SIR,

You cannot (I am confident) but admire that ſo unworthy an inſtrument in the Church of God as my ſelfe, ſhould adventure to publiſh ſo mean a peece to the world, in ſuch an age as this: wherein, the workes of the greateſt Schollers, can hardly eſcape the cenſures of carping Criticks. The thoughts hereof (I muſt confeſſe) would have diſcouraged mee, had I not hope, that a peece of naked truth, might finde acceptance among the friends of

truth when I ſee ſo many idle pamphlets (the iſſues of diſtempered braines) not only puliſhed, but highly applauded by thoſe, who (Athenian like) prefer guilded novelty before old, and ſollid verity.

It is a plain Sermon, preached to a plaine Auditorie, the ſubject matter whereof is Chriſts Birth, *and (therein) a* Chriſtians benefit; *a fit ſubject for this age wherein wee live, in which ſome (eſpecially, in the height of our ſad diſtractions, when mens tongues were lawleſſe:) did not only too lightly ſet by, but alſo blaſphemouſly revile the Saviour of Mankinde, accounting the birth of Chriſt no better then ſpurious; and a Chriſtians benefit thereby, no greater then by the birth of a Dog. Good God! what deſperate expreſſions are theſe? ſuch indeed as ſurpaſſe my skill to match them with a fit epithite. Should I ſay Divilliſh, I fear I ſhould wrong the Divill, who (I am almoſt perſwaded) would tremble to utter them. This I am ſure of, we have a more Chriſtian like confeſſion then ſo taken from his own mouth* [a] I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God. *Others there are who ſeem as willing to part with the memory of his birth, as they have*

[a] Mark 1.24.

have been (which ſome boaſt of to their ſhame) to forget his Prayer. And amongſt thoſe, who ſo highly cry up his birth-day, too few are ſeriouſly apprehenſive of the benefit of his birth, or expreſſe that joy (eſpecially in their lives) which becomes the ſenſe of ſo great a mercy.

I have done my endeavour therefore (according to that talent which God hath given me) to vindicate the honour of Chriſt my Saviour, and to work in Chriſtians a higher eſteem both of his Birth and Benefits. And this (ſuch as it is) I humbly dedicate to your Worſhip, beſeeching you to accept of it as a reall expreſſion of a thankfull heart, for all your undeſerved favours: Amongſt which, I cannot but gratefully mention that annuall benevolence vouchſafed, firſt of all, by your religious Father (now in Heaven) towards my education, and continued ever ſince by your worthy ſelf, as an incouragement to my ſtudies. Moſt of thoſe who know me, know alſo my engagements to your Worſhip: And very ungratefull were I, if (whiles I remember them to others) I ſhould forget them to your ſelf.

The Authour of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews

tells

tells us of [b] Abel, *that* being dead, hee yet ſpeaks; *and beleeve it Sir; it was a chief motive that put me upon this bold adventure, to publiſh theſe my poor labours under your worſhips patronage, that they might ſpeak my thankfull acknowledgment of your bounty to the world, when I my ſelf ſhall want breath to expreſſe it. For my part I muſt for ever deſpair to make you any other requitall; which I look upon to be as far beyond my ability, as your favours are above my deſerts. I muſt therefore leave that to him who is able to render them ſeven fold into your boſome; which is the hearty deſire of him, who is*

b cap. 11. 4.

A dayly Supplicant at the throne of Grace for the continuall happineſſe both of you and yours.

JOHN HIGHAM.

CHRIST'S-Byrth, THE CHRISTIANS-Benefit.

PASL. CXVIII. VER. XXIV.

This is the day which the Lord hath made, Wee will Rejoyce and bee Glad in it.

THIS Pſalme was penned by *David*; and, ſo farre as it concernes *Davids* perſon, it hath relation (as 'tis conceiv'd by learned and orthodox Expoſiters) to his full eſtabliſhment in his Throne, after the death of *Saul*, and of his ſonne *Iſhboſheth*. I ſay full Eſtabliſhment; for wee may reade him there annointed, before wee ſhall finde him compleatly ſetled.

Firſt, by *Samuel*, immediatly upon *Saul's* rejection[a]. *Then* Samuel *tooke the horne of Oyle, and annoynted him in the midſt of his Brethren.* After which, having by his undaunted valour, and reſpectfull demeanor, wonne himſelfe into the Peoples affections, in ſo much that the women, in their Songs, began now to detract from

[a] 1 Sam. 16. 13.

Saul's worth, and to extoll *David* farre above him; whereupon *Saul* (who seemed before to affect him well enough, while himselfe carried the name & credit of Conqueror) envies his deserved praise, fearing no lesse then that *David* will supplant him. [b] *And the women answered one another as they played and said; Saul hath slain his thousands, and* David *his ten thousands. And* Saul *was very wroth, and the saying displeased him: and and he said, They have ascribed unto* David *ten thousands, and to mee they have ascribed but thousands, and what can hee have more but the Kingdome? And* Saul *eyed* David *from that day and forward, i. e.* cast an evill eye upon him; endeavoring from that time till the day of his death, both by Policie and by Power, to deprive him of his life; who otherwise (as hee conceived) would deprive him of his Kingdome.

b 1 *Sam.* 18. 7, 8, 9.

But that God who sent *Samuel* to annoynt him, is alwaies present to protect and defend him, hee cleeres *David's* innocency, defeats *Sauls* Policie, enfeebles his Power; and if yee remove your eyes but to the last Chapter of that booke, yee shall finde him, by the just hand of God, ensnared in such a trap as hee had set for the other. In divers Chapters together you may see *Saul* hotly pursuing *David*; at last you may behold him so hotly pursued by the Philistims, that, despayring of an escape. hee imbrues his hands in his owne Blood, to prevent (as we may conceive) a more dishonorable death [c].

c 1 *Sam.* 31. 3, 4.

And the Philistines *followed hard upon* Saul, *and upon his Sonnes, and the* Philistines *slew* Jonathan *and* Abinadab, *and* Machishua, Saul's *Sonnes, and the Battell went sore against* Saul, *and the Arrowes hit him, and hee was sore wounded of the Archers. Then said* Saul *unto his Armour bearer; Draw thy Sword, and thrust me thorow therewith, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust mee thorow and abuse mee: But his Armour bearer would not, for he was sore afraid; therefore* Saul *took a Sword and fell upon it.*

Thus

Thus *Saul* being dead, *David is annoynted a ſecond time*[d] But it is only over *Judah*[e]; the other Tribes profeſſing Allegiance to *Iſhboſheth*, whom *Abner*[f] the Captain of *Saul*'s Hoaſt proclaimed King in his Fathers ſtead, which was the occaſion of a bloody Warre betweene *David* and the houſe of *Saul*[g]; But at length *Abner*, taking diſtaſte[h], proves diſloyall, ſends Meſſengers before him to make his Peace, and ſoone after comes himſelfe in to *David*[i]. The news hereof breedes great perplexitie in the thoughts of *Iſhboſheth*, and a greater diſtraction amongſt his Subjects; high time they thinke it is for them now to provide each one for his ſafety: Among the reſt, two of his Captaines, *Banah* and *Rechab* conſult together to take off their new Kings head, and having ſo done they carry it to *David* for a Preſent[l]; when they came to his Houſe hee lay on his Bead, and they ſmote him and ſlew him, and tooke off his head, and brought it unto *David* to *Hebron*, and ſaid to the King. *Behold the Head of* Iſhboſheth *the Sonne of* Saul *thine Enemy which ſought thy Life, &c.* You may ſee their reward in the verſes following[k].

David now is annoynted the third time[l], and whereas before his Government was confined to *Judah* only, now it extends it ſelfe to *Iſrael* alſo, *from* Dan *even* to Beerſheba; Hee is now eſtabliſhed in his Throne by an univerſall Conſent, immediatly whereupon hee overthrew the *Philiſtines* with a great ſlaughter: who conceived that a fit oportunity (while the Jewes were rejoycing and making merry for their new King) to ſubdue them, and make them Tributary to themſelves; *David* having at length obtayned ſome reſpit, by the death of thoſe two his implacable Enemies, and by this new victory over the *Philiſtines*, beginnes now to reflect on thoſe ſeverall paſſages of Gods providence, of which hee had ſuch ample experience, during the time of his troubles. Hee caſts up his apparent dangers, and Gods gracious deliverances; and finding the totall ſumme to amount

d 2 Sam. 2. 4.
e v. 8 & 9.
f 2 Sam. 3.
g v. 7. 8.
h v. 12. & 20.
i Cap. 4. 7.
k v. 9, 10, 11, 12.
l Cap. 5. 3.

mount very high; Hee calls an Aſſembly, and gives God the glory of his Salvation, in the words of this Pſalme. And this was the occaſion of the Pſalme, as it concernes *Davids* Perſon.

But this Pſalme lookes farther then *David*, even to *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Sonne of *David*. This reference is cleered by the words of the two and three and twentith verſes. *The Stone which the Builders refuſed is become the head Stone of the Corner. This is the Lords doing, and it is marveilous in our eyes.* Which words anſwere to none, or at leaſt to none ſo exactly as they doe to *Chriſt*. To
l *Iſa.* 28. 16. him *Iſaiah* applies them Prophetically[l]. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Behold I lay in Sion for a foundation a Stone, a tryed Stone, a precious corner Stone, a ſure Foundation.* *Peter* applies them moreplainly, pointing as it were at him with his
m *Acts.* 4. 10 fingers[m], *Be it known unto you all, and to all the People of Iſrael, that by the name of* Jeſus Chriſt *of* Nazareth, *whom yee Crucified, whom God rayſed up from the Dead; even by him doth this man ſtand before you whole.* This was the Stone which was ſet at nought by you Builders, which is become the head of the Corner. Laſtly, *Chriſt* himſelfe applies them
n *Mat.* 21. 42 to himſelfe, even in ſo many words[n], and that moſt divinely: *Jeſus* ſaith unto them, *Did ye never read in the Scriptures, the Stone which the Builders refuſed is become the head of the Corner. This is the Lords doing, and it is marvailous in our Eyes,* Word for word anſwering to that in this Pſalme: whereby it appeares plainly that *David* ſpake them Typically, as hee was indeede a Type of *Chriſt*; who anſwer to one another as exactly as the before mentioned places, or as in a Glaſſe face anſwereth to face.

[*Type*] *David* (you have heard) was annoynted three ſeverall times. Firſt, by *Samuel*; Secondly, by the men of *Judah*; Thirdly, by the Elders of *Iſrael*. [*Antitype*] His three annoyntings very fitly reſemble *Chriſts* annoynting to his three fold Office, *(viz.) Kingly, Prieſtly*, and *Propheticall*. [*Type*] No ſooner (almoſt

is

is *David* annoynted, but his life is purſued. [*Antitype*] No ſooner is the byrth of this King, (*viz.*) *Chriſt*, divulged, but preſently his deſtruction is plotted. [*Type*] *Saul* feares *David* will ſupplant him. [*Antitype*] *Herod* feares *Chriſt* will ſupplant him [o]. *When* Jeſus *was borne in* Bethlehem *of* Judea, *in the dayes of* Herod *the King, Behold there came Wiſe men from the Eaſt to* Jeruſalem, *ſaying, Where is hee that is borne King of the Jews? For wee have ſeene his Starre in the Eaſt, and are come to worſhip him. When* Herod *the King had heard theſe things hee was troubled.* [*Type*] *Saul* dying, leaves an *Iſhbeſheth* to ſucceede him, one that loves *David* as little as himſelfe. [*Antitype*] *Herod* dying, leaves an *Archelaus* behinde him, an Heire (as *Joſeph* feares) to his Fathers malice, as well as to his Crowne [p]; *When hee heard that* Archelaus *did reigne in* Judea *in the roome of his Father* Herod, *hee was afraid to goe thither.* [*Type*] *David* (after theſe) had Philiſtines to encounter with. [*Antitype*] So *Chriſt* (after theſe) hath Scribes, Phareſies and Saducees to deale with; who all combined together to ruine him. [*Type*] *David* (notwithſtanding all theſe) is preſerved, his Enemies are vanquiſhed, and his Throne is eſtabliſhed. [*Antitype*] *Chriſt* (maugre all theſe) did, doth, and ſhall Reigne till the worke of our Redemption be compleated, till the number of Gods elect bee accompliſhed, till all thoſe other Sheepe, which are not yet of *Chriſts* Fold, bee brought in and made, with the reſt, to become one Sheep fold under one Sheep heard [q], till enmitie bee ſubdued, and all his Foes are made his Footſtoole; which done, hee ſhall then reſigne up the Kingdome to his Father, from whom hee firſt received [r] it. *Then commeth the end, When hee ſhall have delivered up the Kingdome to God, even the Father, When hee ſhall have put downe all rule, and all Authority and Power; for hee muſt Reigne till hee have put all Enemies under his Feete.* [*Type*] The day of *Davids* Enthroning had a marke of eminency upon it. *This is the day, &c.* [*Antitype*] So

o *Mat* 2 1,2,3.

p *Mat.* 2. 22.

q *Joh.* 10. 16.

r 1 *Cor.* 15 24, 25.

had *Christs* Byrth day too[f]; *Your father* Abraham *rejoyced to see my Day, hee saw it and was glad.* Hee saw it not with his bodily Eyes; for it was neere upon two thousand yeeres after the Promise was made to *Abraham*, before the dawning of this day appeared; therefore hee saw it only with the Eye of his Faith, and this sight rejoyced his heart exceedingly.

[f] *Joh.* 8 56.

Related it was by an Angell of God to the Shepherds, for a peece of the best newes that ever sounded in the eares of man it is said, [t] that while the Shepheards were abiding in the Fields, and keeping watch over their Flockes by night; the Angell of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord Shined round about them, in so much that they were sore afraid. *And the Angell said unto them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall bee to all people; for unto you is borne this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* A day Solemnized by a whole quire of Angels Singing *gloriam in excelsis.* Glory bee to God on high, on earth peace, good will towards men. And if those blessed Spirits did celebrate his Birth day with such a mellodious noise, and ravishing harmony who receaved no benefit at all thereby; How inexpressably precious then should the memory thereof bee to us? Sith it was for us men, and for our Salvation that he came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin *Mary.* Let us alwayes preferre this in our mirth; and now, with one accord in the words of *David* here in the Text expresse our sense of so precious a mercy: *This is the day which the Lord hath made: Wee will rejoyce, and bee Glad in it.*

[t] *Luc.* 2 8 9. 10.

Division of the Text.

The words (not to trouble you with any curious Division of art) fall naturally into the two chiefe parts of a Sermon according to our Country method: *viz.* the Doctrine and the use. The Doctrine yee have in these words: *This is the day which the Lord hath made* the

the uſe in theſe. *Wee will rejoyce and bee glad in it.*

In the proſecution of both theſe I ſhall uſe as much brevity, as ſuch a Subject will poſſibly admitt of, the rather becauſe I have been longer then ordinary in the preface or introduction on which indeed lies the ſtrength of all that which followes, as the building on the foundation. So thar this being the more firm the other will bee the more unqüeſtionable. I ſhall beginne with that which lies firſt in order : *viz.* The Doctrine, *This is the day which the Lord hath made.*

This, the day which the Lord made ? Why ? Did not God make all dayes as well as this : Or why is God ſayd to make this day eſpecially ? *Anſ.* Firſt, Without all peradventure God made all dayes as well as this day; " *The day is thine, the Night alſo is thine, thou haſt prepared the Light, and the Sunn.* Where we have both the *cujus*, and the *ex qua* ; or rather, the efficient, and formall cauſe of the day. If any be ſo weak as to move ſuch a Queſtion, Whoſe is the day ? or, who made the day ? there hee hath an *Anſwer*. It is thine, *i. e.* the day challengeth God for its author. If any deſire further information : and to know what is the *eſſe formale* of the day ? Or what is that which gives, being to the day ? *David* gives him to underſtand it in the following words the Light and the Sunn firſt the Light.

u *Pſal.* 74 16.

This was the firſt peece of the Creation. The firſt word that the eternall word ſpake was *Fiat Lux* let there bee Light " *and it was ſo.* For *Dei dicere eſt facere* both in that, & in all the other parcells of his Workmanſhip. ' Hee did but *Command and they were created.* *Before this was formed there was nothing but darkneſſe over the face of the Deep.*' This Light was that which made the day ' *Hee divided the Light from the Darkneſſe, and called the Light day, and the Darkneſſe Night.*

w *Gen* 1.3.
x *Pſal.* 148. *v.* 6
y *Gen* 1 1.
z *v.* 4. & 5.

Secondly, The Sunn, Hee prepared the Light and the ſunn. After three dayes (as the Hiſtory informeth us) hee gathered this Light into certaine bodies, which hee conſtituted

constituted and appointed subordinate Governours of
a *Psal.*148 8,9 the Day and Night [a] *The Sunn to rule the Day, and the Moon and the Starrs to governe the Night* ; as also to
b *Gen.*1.14. distinguish day and night times and seasons &c. [b] *Let there bee Lights in the firmament of Heaven to seperate the Day from the Night, and let them bee for signes, and*
c *Psal.*19.5. *for seasons, for dayes and for yeers.* The Psalmist [c] tels us of a race which the Sunne continually runns. *In them hee hath set a Tabernacle for the Sunn, which cometh forth as a Bridegroome out of his Chamber, and rejoyceth as a Gyant to runn his race.* His going out is from the end of the Heaven : and his compasse is unto the end of the Same. So then the Sunns race is that Circuit or compasse which hee fetcheth about the earth : going from East to West in our Horizon : and from thence to East againe under the earth out of our sight. Vulgar Capacities look on this as a peece of petty Heresy : because they cannot conceave, how the Sunn can have passage under them. But this opinion wants not authority to back it either in humane Authors or in Divine writ.

The first whereof tels us that *terra & aqua unum*
d *Aristotle de Cœlo. l.*2 *c.*4. *efficiunt Globum*, the earth & water make one Globe, and that there is nothing more exactly round then [d] this. There are indeed many mountanous and hilly places in it : but these are as nothing compared with the greatnesse of the Earth, and hinder this proportion noe more then the least *pulviusculus* or speck of Dust, sticking on a Ball or Glob, hinders the roundnesse of it.
e *Job* 26 7. Secondly, Scripture tels us [e] that *God strecheth out the North over the empty place and hangeth the Earth upon nothing.* In some places indeed it makes mention of foundations. but where these are, no man can tell. If any should take upon him so much skill as to bee able to resolve this Question ; hee must pardon mee if I want faith to believe him ; Seeing I have a better ground to prove his Ignorance therein, then hee hath or can have, to make good to mee what hee in this matter pre-

tend

tends, to know :•my ground is, that God hath locked this up *inter arcana imperij* amongſt thoſe ſecrets which many, more out of vain curioſity then ſollid wiſdome ſearth after , but Shall not be able to comprehend. *Thus* [f] *Saith the Lord if Heaven above can be meaſured, and the foundations of the Earth ſearched out beneath; I will alſo caſt off all the ſeed of Iſarell, for all that they have done ſaith the Lord.* And now having by theſe Authorities cleered unto you the Sunns paſſage ; Wee may eaſily perceive the cauſe, of the Day, and Night ; for the Earth being round, one half of it only can behold the Sunn, at one time; and in that halfe 'tis Day; on the oth'r the Sunn then Shines not, and there 'tis Night. Well then It is cleer from that place of *Davids* Pſalms where hee tells us of the efficient, and formal cauſes of the Day that hee calls not this Day of Gods making in the Text, as if hee made this and none elſe.

[f] *Jer* 31.37.

Therefore, Secondly, Wee muſt conceive, hee calls this the day which the Lord hath made Κατ'ἐξοχὴν by way of eminency, becauſe God upon this Day confirmed and eſtabliſhed him in his Kingdome : which (compared to thoſe dayes interveining this and his firſt anointing) deſerves indeed to bee called a day of Gods making in an eſpeciall manner. During that ſpace of time hee was chaſed by his Enemies, like a Hart before a kennel of Hounds, or (to uſe his owne words, [g] *like a Partridge in the mountaines.*

[g] 1 *Sam.* 26. 20.

Which therefore may rather be called ſo many Nights then dayes : according to that phraiſe of his; [h] *Heavineſſe may endure for a night : but joy cometh in the morning.* All that time was a time of heavineſſe, then 'twas night with *David.* God at length raiſeth up his Drooping Spirits, and turn's his mourning into joy : and now 'tis morning or day with him. *This is the day which the Lord hath made.* And thus I have done with the words, as they concerne *David* : and come to ſpeak of them as they relate to Chriſt.

[h] *Pſal.* 30.6.

This is the day which the Lord hath made. (*i.e.*) the day of Chriſts coming into the world, of which that of *Davids* eſtabliſhment was a tipe, as a learned Writer ſpeakes expreſſely [i]; and thoſe expoſitors which ſpeake leaſt, ſpeake enough to warrant the application of theſe words to this day.

i *Mollerus in locum.*

And well may it bee affirmed of this day; for now came that light of Lights into the world, to enlighten thoſe, who before ſate in darkneſſe and in the ſhadow of death. *John*, the forerunner of Chriſt, was indeed a light: but no more comparable to this light which came after him, then is the dawning to the cleereſt noon day: [k] *Hee came for a witneſſe, to beare witneſſe of the Light, that all men Through him might beleeve. Hee was not that light, but was Sent to beare witneſſe of the Light. That was the true Light which lightneth every one that commeth into the World.*

k *Joh* 1 7,8, 9.

Before God created the Light, there was nothing but darkeneſſe. And what elſe was there before this Light was exhibited, eſpecially among us Gentils, but a black thick darkneſſe, thicker farre then that of *Ægypt*, [l] which might bee felt? *The Light Shined in darkneſſe, and the darkneſſe comprehended it not* [m]; *yea, all mankind, both Jews and Gentils, ſate in darkeneſſe* [n] (either of Sin or ignorance) *walked in darkeneſſe*; [o] *had fellowſhip with the unfruitfull workes of darkeneſſe*; [p] yea, was even darkeneſſe it ſelf. [q] And what other portion could it expect in this darke condition, but to be caſt at length into utter darkneſſe; [r] *even that blackneſſe of darkeneſſe for ever.* [s] God in the beginning, when hee had made a ſeparation between light and darkneſſe, called the darkneſſe night: what fitter name then for all that darke time, then a long night?

l *Exod.* 10 21.
m *Joh* 1.5.
n *Luk* 1. 79.
o *Pſal.* 82.5.
p *Eph* 5.11.
q *v.* 8.
r *Mat* 22.13
s *Jude.* 13.

Indeed, Chriſt (who is ſo often in Scripture called Light) was heard of neer four thouſand yeers before, even ſo ſoon as *Adam*, by eating the forbidden fruit, had extinguiſhed that light wherein hee was firſt created: [t] but this was but *in promiſſo*, in the promiſe only: *the Seed*

t *Gen.* 3.15.

Seed of the Woman shall break the Serpents head. Hee was seen in the time of the Law; but it was only *in obscuro*, darkly, by the dim candle-light, as I may say, of Types and Figures. *Balam* tells *Balack* news of a Star; but it was a far off, not neer: *I* [u] *shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not neer: there shall come a Star of* Jocob, *& a Scepter shall rise of* Israel. This Prophecie some apply to *David*, who was indeed a worthy Star in that age of the Church wherein he lived, casting forth a light of Truth & Godlinesse. But others, (& that more fitly) of Christ, who he fore saw, by the Spirit of Prophecy, should come of that People. He was *The Star of* Jacob: *The day Star*; so *Peter* calls him [w]. *The brigh morning Star*; so he stileth himself [x]. *The Sun of Righteousnesse*; so *Malachy* [y]. Now: now it was that the day dawned; that the day Star appeared; that the Sun of Righteousnesse did arise with healing in his wings. It is the light, ye have heard, that gives being to the day: *God called the light day* [z]. Well then, may wee call this a day (and no ordinary day neither) when such a light as this shined; no false one, or *ignis fatuus*; but, *a true Light* [a]: Nor ordinary light, but, *The Light of life* [b]. *This is the Day which the Lord hath made.*

u Numb. 24. 17 vers.
w 2 Peter 1. 19.
x Rev. 22. 16.
y Mat. 4. 2.
z Gen. 1. 5.
a 1 John 9.
b Cap. 8. 12.

A Day that deserves a character of eminency, for the news which it brought with it. Strange news, true news, good news: Strange news; news of a strange Birth and Humiliation: *A Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name* Immanuel; so *Isaiah* Prophesied [c], præfixing an *ecce admirantis*, behold: *miranda canam*, I tell yee the strangest news that ever you heard; a strange Prophecie indeed it was; & this day fulfilled it. The Evangelist St. *Matthew*, relating the manner of our Saviours Birth, saith it was on this wise [d] *When* Mary *his Mother was espoused to* Joseph (*before they came together*) *she was found with Child, and that* Joseph *knew her not, till she had brought forth her first born Son* [e]: And yet his birth was not spurious, as some (whose tongues might deservedly rot out

c Isa. 7. 14.
d Mat. 1. 18.
e vers. 25.

of their mouthes) moſt blaſphemouſly ſuggeſt. *She was with Child* (ſaith the text) *by the Holy Ghoſt*. If any (more nice then wiſe) deſire to know further, how this could be? let him lend his eare to the Angel, unfolding the ſame to the Virgin *Mary* her ſelf; when he firſt told her the news, how highly ſhe was in Gods favour, and that ſhe ſhould *conceive in her womb, and bring forth a Son, and call his name Jeſus*; and, *that God would give him the Throne of his Father* David: *That he ſhould raign over the Houſe of* Jacob *for ever: And of his Kingdome there ſhould be no end.* She preſently (not able to apprehend how ſuch a ſeeming impoſſibility could be effected) demands of the Angell, *how this ſhould be, ſeeing ſhe knew not a man*[f]? He tels her in anſwer to her queſtion, That *the Holy Ghoſt ſhould come upon her, and the power of the higheſt ſhould over-ſhadow her*; ſignifying hereby (as a judicious expoſitor hath it on theſe words) [g] *This miſtery cannot be ſeen clearly, and therefore ought not to be examined curiouſly.* A Mother, and yet a Virgin; a Virgin and yet a Mother.

f Luc. 1 34, 35.

g Calvin in Locum

Virgo fuit partum poſt, in, & ante ſuum: a perpetuall Virgin before, in, and after his Birth: a ſtrange Birth indeed. And was it not altogether as ſtrange, that God ſhould be in the womb, and that the Creature ſhould bring forth the Creator: *His name ſhall be called* Immanuel, *which (being interpreted) is, God with* [h] *us. Tria opera ſeu tres mixturas fecit omnipotens illa Majeſtas in aſſumptione noſtræ carnis, ita ſingulariter mirabilia & mirabiliter ſingularia, ut talia nec facta ſunt nec facienda amplius ſuper terram conjuncta ſunt Deus & homo, Mater & Virgo fides & cor* [i] *hominum.* Three works or mixtures hath that Almighty Majeſty made, in the aſſuming of our fleſh, ſo ſingularly wonderfull, and ſo wonderfully ſingular, that ſuch things have not been, neither ſhall ever be done on earth again: Conjoyned God and Man in one Perſon; one woman is both the Mother of a Child, and a Virgin; and faith and mens hearts are joyned

h Mat 1 23. Bernar'i

i Berna d.

Joyned together. *Iſaiah* that Prophecied of this ſtrange Birth, Prophecies of a name ſuitable to it: [k] *His name ſhall be called Wonderfull.* We read of many wonderfull things in the Scriptures, but none of them like to this. *Ciprian* meditating on this, looks on the reſt, compared hereto, as things not to be admired at. His words are theſe: *Non mirabor amplius ſtructuram mundi, non Lunæ vices, non temporum viciſſitudines aut Solis curſum, ſed Dominum in utero omnipotentem in cunis.* I will no more marvell at the Fabrick of the world, the changes of the Moon, nor the revolution of Seaſons, or the courſe of the Sunne; but I will wonder at the Lord in the womb, and at the Almighty in Swadling Clouts.

[k] *Iſay* 9 6.

So wonderfull it was, that the Jew wants faith to believe it; yea, rejects it as ridiculous; and yet notwithſtanding, he embraceth that for a piece of undoubted truth which hath as much of ſeeming improbability in it as this, *viz.* the *budding, bloſſoming, and fruit-bearing of* Aarons *Rod*[l], which was indeed a type of this, *Pariet* Aaronis *Virga ſine ſemine, & non pariet Virgo ſine ſemine? aut utrumq; negate aut utrumq; concedite, &c.*[m] If *Aarons* Rod could bring forth fruit without ſeed, Why not a Virgin? either believe both or reject both: Let the unbelieving Jews ſhew me how that conld be, and I will reſolve him in this: He cannot doe that for me, nor I this for him. The Jew believes that, although he cannot ſound the depth of it: And why ſhould not a Chriſtian firmly believe this in his heart, although he cannot expreſſe it with his tongue.

[l] *Numb.* 17. 8. *ver. ſ.*

[m] *Auguſtin. L b 3. de Symbol cap 4.*

Secondly, A ſtrange Humiliation, that he that was God, coequall, coeſſentiall, and coeternall with his Father; ſhould come down from Heaven to take upon him the Nature of man; yea, and the infirmities of mans nature (ſinfull ones only excepted) divers expreſſions whereof we finde recorded upon ſundry occaſions: He was that *living bread which came down from Heaven*[n];

[n] *John* 6. 51

and yet we finde him *hungry*[o]: *A fountain of living water*; and yet *thirſty*[p]: *The way*[q]; and yet *weary*[r]: *The truth*; and yet *contradicted by ſinners*[s]: *The life*; and yet *he ſuffered death.*

A ſtrange Humiliation; that he that was *Rex Regum, Dominus Dominantium*, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, ſhould make himſelfe of no reputation[t]; that he that was the ancient of dayes[u], ſhould vouchſafe to become a child; the child, not of ſome mighty Monarch, but of ſuch meane Parents as *Joſeph* and *Mary*. Is not this the Carpenters Sonn[w]? It ſeemes that was his Fathers profeſſion, which (wee know) is none of the richeſt, nor hee the richeſt of that profeſſion; This I conclude from two remarkable circumſtances which accompanied his wives lying in. The Evangeliſt Saint *Luke*, relating the manner ſaith, That when the newes of *Chriſts* byrth had been told to the Sheepheards, by the Angel, they preſently reſolve to goe to *Bethlehem* and to ſee this thing which is come to paſſe; and they came with haſte, and found *Mary* and *Joſeph* (in no better chamber then a Stable) and this divine Babe, lying (in no ſtatelyer Cradle) then a Manger[x], and this without queſtion was that roome or houſe where (as Saint *Matthew* ſpeaketh)[y] thoſe Wiſemen found him, who (directed by a Starre) came from the Eaſt to give this new borne King a Viſite, and to preſent him with ſuch choice commodities as their Country afforded, in token of Homage. The former of theſe two *Evrngeliſts* notes one cauſe of it to bee this. *There was no roome for them in the Inne*[z], and wee may ſafely ad *Joſephs* poverty for another; for though every roome was taken up, yet if *Joſeph* had beene a man of note I cannot conceive that the Gueſts would have been ſo uncivill as not to give place upon ſuch a preſſing occaſion: The Poets words were then, are now, and will bee alwaies true, (*viz.*)

In precio precium,——dat Cenſus honores,
Cenſus amicitias: pauper ubique jacet.

Joſeph

o *Mat* 4.2.
p *Joh.* 19.28. *verſ.*
q *Joh* 14,6.
r *Cap* 4 6.
s *Heb* 12 3.
t *Philip* 2 7.
u *Dan* 7.9.
w *Mat.* 13.55.
x *Luc.* 2. 15, 16.
y *Mat.* 2.
z *Luc.* 2. 7.

Joſeph was a poor man and therefore muſt bee contented with ſuch accommodations for his Wife as the Inn-keeper (without diſplacing better Gueſts) could afford him.

As for *Mary* his Mother, although ſhe were of a royall Tribe, yet was ſhee but a poor diſtreſſed Mayden, as will eaſily appeare by comparing two Texts of Scripture, the one in the Law, the other in the Goſpel: In the Law wee read thus. [a] *And when the dayes of her purifying are fulfilled for a Son, or for a Daughter, ſhee ſhall bring a Lamb of the firſt yeer for a burnt-Offering, and a young Pidgeon, or a Turtle Dove for a ſinn-Offering, unto the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, unto the Prieſt: who ſhall offer it before the Lord, and make an atonement for her, and ſhe ſhall be cleanſed from the iſſue of her blood, this is the Law, for her that hath borne a male, or a female: And if ſhe be not able to bring a Lamb, then ſhee ſhall bring two Turtles, or two young Pidgeons, the one for the burnt-Offering, and the other for a ſinn-Offering: and the Prieſt ſhall make an atonement for her and ſhee ſhall bee cleane.*

a *Levit.* 12 6, 7, 8.

In the Goſpel wee read Thus. [b] *And when the dayes of her purifycation according to the Law of Moſes, were accompliſhed, they brought him to Jeruſalem to preſent him to the Lord (As it is written in the Law of the Lord, every male that openeth the Womb, ſhall be called holy to the Lord): and to offer a Sacrifice; according to that which is ſaid in the Law of the Lord; a paire of Turtle Doves, or two young Pidgeons.* Here is mention made of the Turtle Doves and Pidgeons, *Sed ubi Agnus?* Where is the Lamb? *Anſw. Mary* pleades poverty; therefore the Law excuſeth that, and accepts of theſe.

b *Luc.* 2. 2, 22, 23, 24.

A ſtrange humiliation indeed; and (that which makes it yet more ſtrange) hee thus ſtrangely humbled himſelfe for our ſakes, who were not only ſtrangers but enemies unto him: was not this then a day of ſtrange newes? and yet this newes was no more ſtrange then true,

true, as you have heard sufficiently proved.

Lastly, 'Twas a day of good news also : *Unto you is born this day in the City of* David *a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*[c]. Surely there are none who know in what need mankind stood of a Saviour, but will say this was joyfull news. The Apostle St. *Paul* shews us briefly what our condition was without Christ : [d] *We were under the Law ; and so consequently, under the Curse* ; as he speaks expresly in the Chapter immediatly foregoing that : his words are these. [e] *As many as are of the works of the Law* (*i.e.* that look for justification by the works of the Law, as those under the Law, whilest they are under the Law, have not elsewhere to expect it) *are under the Curse : for it is written ; Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the Law, to do them.* We see here a threefold universall obedience required under the Law. First universall obedience, in respect of the persons obeying, *every one* : That God freely made this proffer to accept of the obedience of some few men (upon condition it were perfect) for all the rest : Where had those few been to bee found that could perform it ? What man is he that liveth, and sinneth not ? He that saith, he hath no sinne, sufficiently proves himself to be a sinner in saying so : *The Scripture hath concluded all under Sinne*[f]. Let God be true and every man a Lyar. But the Law requires more then so, *viz. proprium obedientiam*, proper and personall obedience ; yea, *obedientiam de proprio* ; and in this respect it is called *the Letter*, [g] *the Letter killeth*, because it affords nothing but the litterall command, *Doe this and Live*. It gives no power to perform what it commands : neither will it accept of mans inability as a sufficient excuse for his faylings ; like the *Ægyptian* Task-masters, it requires the full tale of Brick without any allowance of straw, differing herein from the Gospell, which doth not only say, *Believe and thou shalt be saved* ; but withall, it puts grace into the heart ; it gives faith to believe.

c *Luc.* 2. 11. *vers.*

d *Gal* 4. 5.

e *Gal* 3. 10.

f *Gal.* 3 22.

g 2 *Cor.* 3. 6. *vers.*

Secondly,

Secondly, There is univerſall obedience required, in reſpect of the ſubject or things to be obeyed, *All things*: and how could we anſwer this (as the Apoſtle *James* ſpeaks?) In many things we offend all. If any deſire to ſee the naturall mans Anatomy, let him look into St. *Paul's* Epiſtle to the *Romans*, where he ſhall finde an exact one: [h] *There is none righteous, no not one: there is none that underſtandeth: there is none that ſeeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doth good, no not one. Their throat is an open Sepulchre; with their tongues they have uſed deceipt; the poyſon of Aſps is under their lips; Whoſe mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſſe. Their feet are ſwift to ſhed blood: deſtruction and miſery are in their wayes; and the way of peace they have not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.* Hear alſo what *Moſes* ſaith of him, for his inſide: [i] *Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evill continually.* Obſerve it: He doth not ſay ſome few, but *every imagination*: He doth not ſay, they were mixt, partly good and partly bad, but *only evill*; and that not at ſome time only, but *continually*. So then by this you ſee, that every man in the State of nature, is a ſinner; yea, a great ſinner and a tranſgreſſor of the Law: and I may ſafely add this: While he remains ſo, he cannot but ſinne. *Arbitrij libertas ſemel data eſt homini, ſed quia peccavit voluntas ſecuta eſt peccantem peccati habendi neceſſitas.* Man had once free will given him (yea, & power too) not to have ſinned: but becauſe he ſinned willingly, there followed thereupon, as a punniſhment of his ſinne, a neceſſity of ſinning. *Non neceſſitas coactionis ſed conſecutionis*: not that man is neceſſitated to ſinne from any externall principle. As for God he is ſo far from compeling any, that he tempts none hereto: [k] *Let no man ſay, When he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evill; neither tempteth he any man.* As for Satan, although he can, and daily doe tempt all; yet he can force none. There is then

h *Rom.* 3. 10. 11, 12, &c.

i *Gen.* 6 5.

k *Jam.* 1. 13.

no compulsory necessity; but the meaning of those words are, Sinne is a necessary consequent of nature corrupted, which is prone to that which is evill, and averse from any thing truly good: Yea, such is the corruption of mans nature, that it takes occasion to sin from that very Law which was given to restrain sin:[l] *Sinne taking occasion by the Commandement, wrought in me, all manner of concupiscence.* The Apostle doth not say, The Law gave, occasion to sin, but *Sin tooke occasion by the Law.* It is an experimentall truth that a sick man, the more hee is forbidden drinke, the more hee desires it: and 'tis altogether as true of all those that are sick of this spirituall disease; *ea quæ prohibentur magis desiderantur*; They are the more eager after sin, because the Law enjoynes them not to sin.

l *Rom.* 7. 8.

Lastly there is required Universall obedience in respect of time, which is unlimited, wee must not only doe all that the Law commanded us, but wee must continue in the doing thereof: so that if the naturall man could keep the whole Law (which yee have heard is a thing impossible) yet if hee offended but in one point; yea, but once in all his life time, in that one point; this would undoe all, even as one wrack marrs the ship, although shee sayled never so safely before. All this being considered; What a sad *dilemma* is it the poor soul is put to? either he must doe all, and continue to do all which the Law requires, or else hee must suffer for it. Alas! What can hee doe that hath no power of himselfe, so much as to think a good thought? m true: And yet God may justly require this compleat, this exact, this continuall obedience at our hands: for in the Law hee lookes upon a man *in Statu quo prius*; in that estate and condition, wherein hee first created him; then God gave him power to performe whatsoever hee should commaund him: And not *in statu quo nunc*; in that estate wherein hee now is wholly disabled: his fall, which was no fault of Gods, but his owne: *God made*

m 2 *Cor.* 3. 5.

made man upright but he hath sought out many [n] *inventions.*

The penalty followes, and that is, *Cursed*: A short word, but very comprehensive, being an abridgement of the greatest part of the longest Chapter in the old Testament. [o] *If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to doe all his commandements, &c. and his Statutes, which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee; cursed shalt thou bee in the City, and cursed shalt thou bee in the Field, cursed shall bee thy Basket and thy store, &c.* In a word, it comprehends under it all the judgements which an angry God can inflict upon a rebellious people here in this life, and those easelesse, and endlesse, tortures in Hell hereafter, where the Worme never dies, & the Fire never goes out: this it is to be under the Law, and so all are without Christ. This day brought newes of a Saviour borne, a Saviour, come for this very purpose into the world, to redeeme those that were under the Law. Saint *Paul* tells you how [p] *when the fulnesse of time was come, God sent forth his Sonn made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that wee might receive the adoption of Sons made under the Law* (*that is*) was made subject to the Law, not by nature, but by voluntary abasement, as hee was a pledge and surety standing in our stead, representing to God the person of all the elect fullfiling all righteousnesse, satisfying the Justice of God for our disobedience, and freeing us from the curse by takeing the curse upon himselfe; [q] the Law did execute all that jurisdiction over him which it had over us. Christ himselfe *had no sinn, neither was there Guile found in his mouth*; [r] yet taking our sins upon him, the Law was no lesse cruel against this innocent Lamb then it was against us cursed and damned sinners. This was a day of glad tidings indeed. *This is the day which the Lord hath made.*

n *Eccles.* 7. 29

o *Deut.* 28. 15. &c.

p *Gal.* 4. 4, 5.

q *Gal.* 3. 13.

r 1 *Pet.* 2. 22.

Lastly a day wherein God did highly exalt himselfe,

in these following attributes. First in his Love expressed in especiall manner on this day to mankind, *God so Loved the World that hee gave his only begotten Sonne, that Whosoever beleeveth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life*[s]; Here was Great Love! Free Love! Rich Love! Great Love; Hee so loved the World; So, *Quest.* How? *Ans.* With such a Love as the Apostle *John* ushers in with an *Ecce. Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed on us, that wee should bee called the Sonnes of God.* Such a Love as may bee admired, but cannot bee expressed. Secondly, Free Love, which appeared in the freenesse of the gift; Hee gave his Sonne to us: And indeede what can bee freeer then gift? God promised him long before, but what else was it but his free Love that moved him to make this Promise? therefore the Promise being free; Why is not the gift so (as to us) likewise?

[s] *Joh* 3 16.

Lastly, his rich Love, which hee manifested in the richnesse of the gift; had hee enstated us in never so great a Portion of these outward things, it could never have done that for us which this gift hath done. Wee were dead in Trespasses and Sinnes, these could not enliven us; blinde in our vnderstandings, these could not enlighten us; wounded, these could not heale us: Bondslaves to Satan, these could not rescue us; under the curse of the Lawe, the wrath of God and the Sentence of eternall condemnation, these could not reprieve us, much lesse save us.

Christ, who is this rich gift of God, either hath done or will doe this for all his Elect; he came to give Life[t]. *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* It is hee that formed us when wee were not, quickned us when wee were dead, and doth daily renue life and power in the Hearts of his People; well may the Apostle therefore call him our Life[u]. *When* Christ, *who is our Life, shall appeare, then shall yee also appeare with him in Glory.* Hee was sent to open the blinde

[t] *Joh.* 10. 10.

[u] *Colos* 3. 4.

blinde Eyes,[w] *and to give light to thoſe who ſate in darkeneſſe.* *Hee was Wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, and by his Stripes wee are healed;* [x] *delivered us out of the hand of our Enemies, that ſo wee might ſerve him, without feare, in holyneſſe and righteouſneſſe, all the dayes of our Lives; Who can lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect? It is God that juſtifieth, who is hee that condemneth? It is* Chriſt *that dyed, yea rather that is riſen againe, who is alſo at the right hand of God, making interceſſion for us.* Such a gift as is made to us, of that God which gave him, Wiſdome, Righteouſneſſe, Sanctification, Redemption. Wiſdom to inſtruct us; Righteouſneſſe to clothe us; Sanctification to cleanſe us; Redemption to enlarge us and make us free men. *If the Sonne make you free, then are ye free indeede.* [y] *In him all fulneſſe dwels,* [z] *and of his fulneſſe have all wee received, and Grace for Grace.* In a word, having given us ſuch a gift as his owne Son *His only begotten Son, the Son of his boſome in whom his Soul delighted,* [a] *how ſhall hee not with him alſo freely give us all things? Ile habet omnia qui habet habentem omnia,* God hath appointed him *heir of all things*; [b] and therefore if wee have him, wee need not doubt of a Supply of any other thing, ſo farr as it makes for Gods Glory, and for our good; for as hee is heir, *So wee are coheirs or joynt heirs with him*[c].

w *Iſay* 42 7.
x *Iſay* 53. 5.
y *Joh* 8 36.
z *Coloſ.* 1. 19.
a *Iſa* 42. 1.
b *Heb.* 1. 2.
c *Rom.* 8. 17.

Secondly, A day wherein God exalted himſelfe in the atribute of his Wiſdome in finding out ſuch a way to ſave Man-kind, who had loſt and undone themſelves for ever, away beyond the thought of man, yea above the apprehenſion of Angels: who could never have found out a meane whereby Gods juſtice might bee fully ſatisfied and yet the ſinner be eternally ſaved. * *Solus homo non hoc unquam præſtare valebat ſolus itemq́, Deus non hoc præſtare volebat*, Man alone could not, God alone would not doe much for us, therefore it was neceſſary that a Mediator ſhould bee ſuch a one as did partake of both natures; of the manhood, that ſo ſin might

* Palladius l. 1 De unione duarum in Chriſto naturæ.

bee punished in the Same nature that had offended; and of the Godhead that so the man-hood might bee supported, which otherwise must of necessity have sunk under that heavy burden of Gods wrath, and the sufferings therein made perfectly satisfactory for the sins of the whole World: it was that Personall Union of these two natures in Christ which gave worth to his, and made those paines which hee endured in his body and Soule within that space of time which hee hung upon the Crosse equivalent to the damnation of whole mankinde to all eternity, and in this respect it is, that it is said in Scripture (though the Godhead bee impassible.) *God hath redeemed his Church With his owne blood*[d] and [e] *they have crucified the Lord of Glory.*

d *Acts.* 20 28
e 1 *Cor.* 2.8.

Thirdly, God on this day exalted himselfe in the attribute of his power, which hee magnified more now, then at the creation. Then hee made man like himselfe; God created man in his owne image, *in the image of God, created hee him.*[f] But now hee made himselfe like sinfull man, *sent his owne Sonn in the similitude of sinfull flesh.*[g] *Illic participes nos fecit bonorum suorum, hic particeps est factus malorum nostrorum.* There hee made us partakers of his good, of his Wisdome Holinesse, and Righteousnesse; here hee made himselfe partaker of our evills, *Hee who knew no Sin, Was made sin for us, that Wee might bee made the righteousnesse of God in him.*[h] The workes of creation, are called the workes of his Fingers [i] the work of mans redemption (of which Christs birth is the first part that ever hee acted in the World) was the work of his Arme.[k] *O sing unto the Lord a new Song, for hee hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy Arme hath gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his Salvation: his righteousnesse hath hee openly shewed in the sight of the Heathen. Hee hath remembred his Mercy and his truth; the House of Israel, and all the ends of the earth, have seene the Salvation of God.* Hee remembred his truth which is a fourth and

f *Gen.* 1. 27.
g *Rom.* 8. 3.
h 2 *Cor.* 5. 21.
i *Psal* 8. 3.
k *Psal.* 98. 1, 2, 3.

and the next attribute wherein God on this day exalted himſelfe; hee had promiſed him before both by himſelfe and his Servants: by himſelfe hee promiſed *Adam, That the Seed of the Woman ſhould breake the Serpents* [l] *head,* Hee promiſed *Abraham, That in his Seed all the Nations of the earth ſhould bee* [m] *bleſſed.* Hee promiſed him alſo by his Servants, by the mouthes of his holy Prophets, which have been ſince the World began. by the Prophet *Iſaiah,* who in this reſpect may well bee ſtiled an Evangelicall Prophet, becauſe hee ſpeaks as plainly of Chriſt as if hee had with his own eyes ſeene him, and been converſant with him in his owne perſon (as the Evangeliſts were) yea as plainly as that a man would thinke his writingto bee hiſtoricall rather then Propheticall; rather a Hiſtory, relating what Chriſt was, then a Prophecy, foretelling what he ſhould bee. Concerning his Birth hee ſaith *a Virgin ſhould conceive and bear a Son, and that his name ſhould bee Imanuel,* God with us; noting thereby the Union of two natures in one [m] Chriſt. Touching his humiliation hee ſaith [n] *that hee hath no forme, nor comelineſſe, and When we ſhall ſee him, there is no beauty that Wee ſhould deſire him, hee is deſpiſed, and rejected of men; a man of Sorrowes, and acquainted with griefe, hee was deſpiſed and wee eſteemed him not, hee hath borne our griefes, and carried our ſorrowes: yet wee did eſteeme him Smitten of God and afflicted, but hee Was Wounded for our trangreſſion, &c.* And concerning his patience under all thoſe affronts and injuries offered unto him, ſaith, *hee was oppreſſed, and afflicted, yet hee opened not his mouth: hee is brought as a Lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a Sheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo hee openeth not his mouth,* [o] concerning his death and buriall thus. *Hee was taken from priſon, and from judgement: and who ſhall declare his generation? for hee was cut off out of the Land of the Living, and made his grave With the wicked* [p].

[l] *Gen.* 3. 15.
[m] *Gen.* 22. 18.
[m] *Iſa.* 7. 74.
[n] *cap.* 53 2 3 4, 5.
[o] *verſ.* 7.
[p] *verſ.* 8. 9.

God promiſed him by *Jeremiah. Behold the dayes*

come

come, ſaith the Lord, that I will raiſe unto David a righteous branch, and a King ſhall reigne and proſper, and hee ſhall execute judgement, and juſtice in the earth: in his dayes Judah ſhall bee ſaved, and Israel ſhall dwell ſafely, and this is his name whereby hee ſhall bee called, the Lord our righteouſneſſe [q].

[q] *Jer.* 23.5,6

[r] *Dan.* 2. 34. Daniel ſpeaks of a *Stone cut out of a Rock without hands:* [ſ] *Mal.* 4. 2. *Malachie* of a *Sun of righteouſneſſe that ſhould ariſe with healing in his Wings.* And *Moſes*, long before any of [t] *Deut.* 18. 15 theſe, Prophecied of him, [t] And beſides theſe, all the Prophets from *Samuel*, and thoſe that follow after, as many [u] *Acts* 3. 24. as have ſpoken, have likewiſe foretold of this. [u] Now it was, that God was ſaid to remember this his mercifull promiſe, which by himſelfe and by theſe his Servants, hee had made unto his People, ſhewing thereby, that hee was not more mercifull in promiſing, then true and faithfull in performing, although in ſo long a time hee might ſeem (to men) to have forgotten it. It was the firſt promiſe that God made in the old Teſtament, and in the very firſt words of the new wee have the newes of its performance; *The booke of the Generation of Jeſus* [w] *Mat.* 1. 1. *Chriſt* [w] *&c.*

Laſtly a day wherein God did exalt himſelfe in the attribute of his juſtice which was ſo infinitely offended by our trangreſſing of his moſt righteous Lawes, and wee thereby ſo deeply incurred his wrathfull diſpleaſure, which is a conſuming fire, that it muſt needs have burned us down to Hell, had not his owne boſome Son come downe (as hee did on this day from Heaven to quench it with a ſtream of his owne moſt precious blood. In which before mentioned reſpect wee may well ſay, *This is the day which the Lord had made*, and in a ſerious conſideration of thoſe ineſtimable benefits which it brought with it, reſolve with *David* in the next words, *Wee will rejoyce and bee glad in it.* Which brings mee to the Second part of the Text, *viz.* The uſe, of which very briefly.

Some

Some (peradventure) may thinke the proſecution of this part altogether needleſſe, becauſe that this is a noted time for joy and rejoycing, feaſting and merry meetings, &c. true; it is ſo, But whether this bee that joy and rejoycing which this Text (ſpeaks of, and ſuch a day as you have heard this deſcribed to bee) requires; there is the queſtion; if wee weigh it in the ballance, I feare it will prove many graines too light. How many are there that ſpend or (rather) miſpend this time in chambring, wantonneſſe, and in mad merriments, doing the Devill more ſervice in the twelve daies, then in all the twelve Months? What is their joy but a joy in ſinne, and ſo conſequently a ſinfull joy; and to entitle this a joy for a Saviours byrth, comes very little ſhort of that blaſphemy of the Phariſies, who maliciouſly affirmed Chriſt to bee a *glutenous man and a Wine bibber, a friend of Publicans and Sinners*[x]. A friend to Sinners? Hee was ſo indeede, in his ſenſe, but not in theirs. *Hee came not to call the Righteous but Sinners to Repentance*[y]; but what Sinners are thoſe whom hee befriends? Not ſuch as rejoyce and ſport themſelves in ſinne, but ſuch only as doe conceive true ſorrow in their hearts for Sinnes, ſuch ſorrow makes joy and melody in Heaven; *Joy ſhall be in Heaven* (ſaith our Saviour) *over one Sinner that repenteth, more then over ninty and nine juſt perſons which neede no repentance*[z]. On the contrary, that is a Joy that makes myrth and muſick in hell, a Joy of fooles; *Solomon* tells you thoſe are no better that make a mock or may-game of Sinne[a], *A Joy that muſt bee ſorrowed for in time, otherwiſe Woe be to thoſe who thus Rejoyce now, for they ſhall weepe*[b]. (*i. e.*) hereafter, when it will bee too late, when for a ſhort day of ſuch Joy, they ſhall have an eternall night of *Lamentation and Woe, and Weeping and Wayling and gnaſhing of Teeth*: A Joy of a Sinner dead in Treſpaſſes and Sinnes, not of a Saint for a Saviour, who came to raiſe him from the death of Sinne to the life of Righteouſneſſe.

uſe.

x *Luc* 7 34.

y *Mark* 2. 17.

z *Luc.* 15. 7.

a *Prov.* 14. 9.

b *Luc.* 6. 25.

It is a time of feaſting. I blame not thoſe that uſe it,

so it bee for the better and not for the worse. The Primitive Christians had their Love feasts, so called, because they were not only expressions, but also preservatives of Christian Love and amity; if yee have this end in your feasting, your practice suites well with one end of Christs comming: who as hee was Gods good will towards man, so God sent him to create good will in the hearts of men, one towards another. It is an expression of joy: *Go your way, eate the fat, and drinke the sweet, and bee not sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength* [c]. Thus the father of the prodigall expressed his joy for his lost Sonnes returne; *bring hither the fatted Calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and bee merry, for this my Son was dead, and is alive againe; hee was lost and is found* [d]. This is a joyfull day; therefore feasting is seasonable enough; a day that brought a Saviour into the world, who came on purpose to seeke and *to save that which was lost* [e]. Wee shall read in the Gospell, that when hee had called *Levi*, as hee was sitting at the receipt of custome, imediately *hee left all, rose up, and followed him; and made him a great feast*, expressing thereby a great deale of joy in his Saviour [f]. But alas! How few are there, even among those who professe a like joy in Christ, that will bee at the cost to make a feast for Christ? I meane, not Christ personall; for so hee is in Heaven, but Christ mysticall, or Christ in his Members, so hee is still abiding on earth; *yee have the poor alwayes with you, but mee ye have not* [g] *alwayes.* Most thinke that meales Meat lost, that is given to such: surely, had men but half that joy in Christ which they pretend to, they would never grudge to feed him in his poore Members, who came to feast them with his rich Merits: yee cannot bestow it on a more thankefull guest, who, when you have forgotten it, will remember it, and acknowledge to your everlasting comfort: *I was hungry, and yee gave mee Meat; Thirsty, and gave mee drinke: For in as much as yee did it to the least of these, yee did it unto* [h] *mee.*

[c] *Nehem* 8. 10

[d] *Luc.* 15. 23. 24.

[e] *Mat* 18 11.

[f] *Luc* 5. 27, 28, 29.

[g] *Mat.* 26. 11.

[h] *Mat.* 25 35, 40.

This

This is feaſting according to Gods minde. *Eat the fat, and drinke the ſweet, and ſend part unto them, for whom none was prepared*[i]. This is anſwerable to our Saviours rule, *When thou makeſt a Dinner or a Supper, call not thy Frinds, nor thy Bretheren, neither thy Kinſmen nor thy rich Neighbours, i. e.* call not theſe only, *but When thou makeſt a feaſt call the poore, and the maimed, the lame, and the blinde*[k]: the firſt may recompence you by feaſting you again, theſe cannot doe it in kinde, they may in their prayers. *Thou ſhalt bee bleſſed, for they cannot recompence thee; for thou ſhalt bee recompenced at the reſurrection of the juſt*, when yee ſhall have feaſt for your feaſt, new Wine, pure Manna and all manner of Spirituall dainties; and with the continuall cheare, a ſweet and anſwerable welcome; eate, ô friends, drink, and make you merry ô welbeloved; that was Chriſts rule. and if yee follow it this ſhall bee your reward,

i *Nehem.* 8. 10. *verſ.*

k *Luc.* 14. 12, 13, 14.

How many are there, who, at ſuch times, when God vouchſafes them the liberall uſe of his creatures, preſume upon their abuſe, abuſe them to riote and exceſſe, to ſurfeiting and drunkeneſſe? Is this according to Saint *Pauls* rule? *Whether yee eat or drinke, doe it to the glory of God*[l]. Or is not this rather to diſhonour God? to fight againſt God with his owne vouchſafed mercies, to forget God, yee to drinke God and Chriſt and all goodneſſe out of their mindes? this is no joy of a Chriſtian in his Jeſus, but rather of a heathen in his drunken God *Bacchus*.

l 1 *Cor.* 10. 31.

It is another manner of joy which this day requires; a joy that all are not capable of; a joy that ariſeth from an apprehenſion of Gods love to us, in ſending his Son into the world, and of our benefit thereby.

So then, none can truely rejoyce in Chriſts birth, but only thoſe who have benefit by his birth, which all have not; yea, there are many that ſhall wiſh one day, that they never had heard any newes of a Saviour, who, had not they preſumed upon his payment of their ſcore, would

have been more ſparing in their Sinns, conſidering that they muſt all bee put upon their owne accout, and viſited upon their owne backs, *love* and *joy* goe hand in
m Gal 5.22 hand together m: ſo that none can truely rejoyce in Christ, but thoſe who truely love Christ; the ground of
n Joh 4 19. *our love to him* being the aſſurance of *his love to us* n. Wee muſt firſt know aſsuredly, that he loved us, and gave himſelfe for us, before wee can bee really affected with him, ſo as rightly to rejoyce in him. *My Soul doth magnifie the Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoyced in God my Sa-*
o Luc. 1 46. *vieur* o. There was the ground of her joy, *viz.* her particular intereſt in him; hee was her Saviour. So Christ
p Luc. 2 25. hee is called *the conſolation of Iſrael* p; and the Apoſtle makes this a note, yea, a Speciall note of a true Iſraelite, a note that is peculiar to him, and belongs to none elſe. Hee rejoyceth in Christ Jeſus. A joy that is diſtinguiſhed from all pretended joy in this, that it hath its firſt riſe in the heart. A hippocrites joy is only an outſide joy, 'tis in the face, which many times when the heart ſobbs, counterfeits a ſmile. Secondly, The heart being full will have vent: this joy will not bee ſmothered there, but will appeare and ſhew it ſelfe; *If the heart beleeve unto righteouſneſſe; the tongue will*
q Rom. 10 10. *make confeſſion to ſalvation* q. So if the heart conceive joy, the tongue will bring it forth to light, yea, which is more, it ſhall appear cleerely in the life and converſation: the carnall man may talke much, but will doe nothing; hee will *lingua benedicere vita maledicere*, honour Christ with his lips, but his life hath no reliſh of him; I can eaſily gueſſe of my welcome, by my entertainment: if I may bee admitted no farther then the door, the man of the houſe may ſay hee is glad to ſee mee; but I know that this is only a complement: *Behold,*
r Rev. 3.20. ſaith Christ, *I ſtand at the door and knock* r. Hee knocks dayly by the motions of his Spirit; what welcome doth that man or woman give to him that barrs the door againſt him, when as in the mean time, every baſe luſt can bee

bee admitted into the beſt Room hee hath? Hee knocks with the hammer of his word in the miniſtrie thereof; ſtands at the gate many times in a poor *Lazar*, deſiring to bee refreſhed with the crumms that fall from *Divis* his table, if wee turne a deaf eare to the one, and ſhut up the bowels of compaſſion againſt the other; how dwells the love of Chriſt in us?

The Apoſtle ſpeakes it to the great commendations of the *Galatians*, that they *received him as an Angle of God, yea, even as Jeſus Chriſt*[s]. They took great delight in him; as being an Embaſſadour in Chriſts ſtead, who eſteem of thoſe favours that are done to ſuch, as done to himſelfe: even as hee ſaith on the contrary; *hee that deſpiſeth you deſpiſeth mee*[t]. And as for ſuch mercyleſſe miſers, that can afford no reliefe to him in his poore members; they alſo ſhall one day heare that heart-breaking *diſcedite* pronounced againſt them; *depart yee curſed, into everlaſting fire: I was hungery, and yee gave mee no meat; thirſty, and yee gave mee no drinke: for in as much as yee did it not to the leaſt of theſe, yee did it not unto mee.*

[s] Gen. 4 14.

[t] Luc. 10. 16.

Where this joy is, there will be a forwardneſſe to act for Chriſt; a willingneſſe to ſuffer for Chriſt, even the loſſe of that which is moſt neer and deer unto us.

This is that which is called *reall joy*; and where this is wanting (let men pretend what they will) there is no true joy in the heart, nothing but hippocriticall joy in the tongue.

O! yee redeemed ones of the Lord, conſider what the Lord hath done for you; meditate ſeriouſly on thoſe benefits held forth unto you in his birth, that ſo your Spirits may thereby bee wrought to this holy temper; bee thankfull unto him, and ſpeake good of his name; eſpecially ſee to it that yee expreſſe the life of this joy, in joy of your life. Let Chriſt bee ever welcome unto you in the motions of his Spirit, in the miniſtry of his word. Let the *feet of thoſe bee ever beautifull in your*

u Rom. 10. 15. *eyes, who publiſh ſuch glad* u *tidings*; entertaine him in all his offices; not only for your Prieſt, Sacrificing himſelfe for you; but alſo as your Prophet to inſtruct you, as your King to rule and govern you: thinke nothing too much to doe for him; nothing too much to ſuffer for him. Grudge not to part with your deereſt luſts, your neereſt relations, the Fathers of your bodies, the Wives of your boſomes, the fruit of your loynes, and that wich is more precious then all theſe, your lives, for him who thought nothing too hot nor too heavy for you; who abaſed himſelfe that you might bee exalted; became the Son of man, to make you the Sons of God: came out from his Fathers boſome, to lay downe his head, as it were, that ſo hee might free yours, condemned to the block. I ſhall crave leave to ſpeake a word or two, to prevent uncharitable conſtruction, and then I ſhall have done. Let not any thinke by my choiſe of this Text and applying it to this day, that I have any thought of confining your joy to a day; God forbid,

w Heb. 13. 8. for as Chriſt is w *yeſterday and to day, and the ſame for ever*, ſo hath a Chriſtian cauſe to rejoyce in him evermore: but becauſe the Church formerly ſet a part this day in particular, thereon to celebrate the memory of his birth; and it is lookt on ſtill, by many, under the notion of his birth day; I have done my endeavour therefore, that it may bee kept an acceptable day unto the Lord, It were a thing very much unbeſeeming Chriſtians to bee like Parrats, which prattle of this and that, without underſtand: ſo for theſe to talke of Chriſts birth-day, and bee no whit affected with it. *Zacharie*, who, before was dumb, had his tongue at liberty to ſing a Hymn of praiſe at the newes of a Saviour: and deſervedly may that mans tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth who hath not a *benedictus* to ſacrifice to God for ſo great

x Luc. 1 68. a benefit.x *Bleſſed bee the Lord God of Iſrael; for he hath viſited and redeemed his people, and hath raiſed up a mighty ſalvation for us, in the houſe of his ſervant David, &c.*

FINIS.